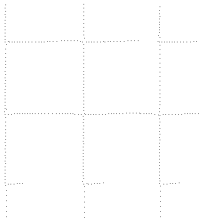


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From: Harris-Bishop, Rusty
Sent: Tue 8/11/2015 4:36:53 PM
Subject: Farmington Public Meeting Notes April 10, 2015



These are my notes from the Farmington public meeting April 10, 2015. Please distribute to anyone else that might find this useful.

The meeting was hosted by the San Juan County . There were approximately 250 people in attendance at the Farmington at the Civic Center. Kim Carpenter, County Executive Officer, moderated the meeting.

Members on the panel included the State Engineer, Secretary Ryan Flynn from the New Mexico Environmental Department, Mark Hayes and Jon Reinhart, Region 6 OSCs, Mark McCasland, EPA Region 6 Water Division; San Juan County, and the New Mexico Department of Agriculture Extension Program.

Information that was provided prior to the panel making statements: Red Cross providing water for people on wells. Showers also available. If on pubic water, systems are fine. Reverse 911 system in operation. The State is conducting water analysis for well owners at the County Fair and following up with owners to evaluate their wells.

Secretary Flynn, NMED: We are here for the long haul. We don't have any data to share yet, waiting on sampling results. "Acting like our lives depend on it." 200 wells have been analyzed. Some tentative good news show 15 wells in floodplain were feeding the river versus drawing from river, but that won't apply to all wells.

State Engineer: Don't use water in irrigation ditches until we know it's safe. Doing an inventory starting tomorrow. Looking for discoloration and sedimentation. Will develop a plan to treat sediments if found. Field office is in Aztec.

Secretary of Ag Jeff Witte: They have delivered livestock water, 1500 gallons. Much less than irrigation water needs, which are measured in acre-feet versus gallons. They still need to know what levels of contaminants are safe for crops and livestock. Cautioned users to not use water even if it's clear until data is announced, because color doesn't indicate safety or danger. Does crop insurance cover this incident? Probably not, since this is not a natural event. Document losses so that claims can be processed.

Mark Hays, Region 6 OSC: EPA Region 6 has been sampling water intakes and will get river data Wednesday. Helping NMED sample water wells. Establishing central number to call for New Mexico and Navajo residents. Claims process and form are on [epaosc.org](http://epaossc.org) under the Gold King Mine site. *(note: EPA is supposedly still working on a fact sheet to explain how to fill it out, with an FAQ.)*

Questions were submitted in writing versus having a microphone for audience:

Is it safe to walk along the river? Any air exposure? EPA: Yes it's safe. We've done air sampling.

What other agencies are being used to treat toxins in soils and water? EPA: CG strike team is on the way, along with someone from ATSDR. NM Ag: Federal Dept of Ag, US Fish and Wildlife, and USDA will be asked.

Any evidence of dead fish or wildlife? County Extension: None seen.

Who is in charge with EPA here? Sean McGrath said we know what's in the water and not

telling us. EPA: Analyzing for heavy metals. NMED doesn't have metals data yet either.

How are rural water provider going to clean metals out of water? EPA: We need data to know how to clean it up and make a plan.

What's going on at the mine? EPA: Treating water before going into Cement Creek. Lime and flocculent are being added to raise pH, clump metals and settling ponds store dropped out sediment. This is a short term solution.

Is it possible for the river to be open by Friday? EPA: Possible but needs to be made by local (Durango) officials based on data. (note: San Juan River is not currently closed, as far as anyone knows.)

USA Today article said EPA contractor caused the spill. Can we explain it? EPA: explained what we were doing up at the mine. Water representative said the blockage in the adit would probably have failed without any activity by EPA because of previous plug was just collapsed soil and wasn't a solution. As other mines have been plugged, water has built up in the mountain and will come out somewhere.

What happens with schools if there are already water restrictions? Any schools not on municipal systems will have water brought in.

What resources are available for wildlife along the river? NM Game and fish and NGOs have been looking at wildlife. Not seeing any impacts.

What are normal levels of metals on water? When will water be available for irrigation, drinking, and livestock? Still waiting on data. Will make sure raw water for drinking plants is clear before using. Determining risk levels that are acceptable for crops and animals. Ditch supervisors are being coordinated with to let them all know what situation is and when irrigation water can be used.

Are there guidelines for reducing water consumption? Aztec has conservation measures in place. State engineer has water conservation bureau.

Farmington city manager: Farmington has an existing water supply for 4 months at current use. Could last longer as demand drops.

Will soil and water samples be taken long term? Yes. Need data and long term assessment plan will be developed.

Where can we fill up water truck to irrigate a commercial garden? Bonnie with NM Ag County Extension has info. Still working on details.

Where are all the testing sites along the river? EPA: Near intakes and pumping stations.

Is there any testing going on in the west side of the county? Region 6 is focusing on Aztec and Farmington. Other teams from EPA Region 9 are working on Navajo nation.

Where can we get containers for water? Bonnie has info. County extension will have resources.

Where will our city water in Aztec come from? Can get from San Juan above confluence.

We heard that there were only 8 or 9 days available in Lower Valley. What are they going to do?

EPA Water: They can interconnect. For water users on Navajo that are connected to Farmington system they will be served.

Animas valley has 3 weeks. What happens then? EPA Water: Interconnections and emergency water.

We have a well for irrigation, is it safe to use? NMED: Depends on well. Bring in a sample to the fair and let NMED evaluate your well.

Center point fire department isn't open long enough and I had to buy water. Where can I go? Will get them open longer, and there is a list of other places, one open 24 hours.

Who is going to reimburse for water and fuel? EPA: Use standard form 95 for claims.

Why did it take so long to get the warning from EPA? Region 6 found out on Thursday morning. Then notified state immediately.

When will water stop coming out of mine? Water naturally flows through mine and current treatment is just temporary. EPA was investigating the mine and looking to develop long term solution when .

What is each agency doing for contaminated soils? EPA: We'll be sampling and coordinating with state.

Where is the floodplain? Need to look at maps from NMED and state engineer. Getting info from residents at county fair on well locations. Staff are going out afterward.

Any health effects for workers hit with mine release? No, there were no injuries at the mine.

If my well is near the river when will the continuation reach me? Depends on the geology. Irrigation ditches are creating recharge areas since this is high irrigation season. Might change over time.

How will long term testing be determined? Don't know yet how long but there are surface water regulations that are always in effect so the long term health of the river is important to EPA and the State of New Mexico.

How do we know if local produce is safe to eat? County Extension: Local produce is safe. Farmers market tomorrow.

If Farmington switches to San Juan River water, will it have human wastes in it? Water is treated to be safe. NMED encourages people to be on municipal water. Safe and tested. Know it's expensive but state encourages to connect.

Randy and Rob, anything to add?



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